

**PRINCIPALS' ADVISORY COUNCIL (PrAC) MEETING
MINUTES
DECEMBER 15, 2003
9:00 A.M. – 2 P.M.
STATE BOARD ROOM**

Attending:

Sandy Allen, Phillip Barker, Ron Bryan, Linda France, Randy Harrison, Brenda Hauser, Beth Johnson, Kevin Noland, Howard Osborne, Gordon Parido, Gary Perkins, Mark Raleigh, Diane Robertson, Peggy Shearer, Scott Trimble, Debbie Tronzo, Marty Vowels, Roger Wagner, Gene Wilhoit, Terry Yates, and Deneen Zimmerman

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – Ron Bryan, Linda France, Kevin Noland, Diane Robertson, and Scott Trimble

- Kentucky is one of two states in the country that has not completed its work on NCLB. Kentucky will not be under NCLB accountability this coming year. Kentucky is still learning from advisory groups, legislative bodies, citizens' groups, and the KBE. Kevin Noland brought the PrAC members up to date on regulations to merge state and federal assessment and accountability requirements as a result of NCLB. The KBE, at its December meeting, defined a "full academic year." For a student to be counted for accountability purposes at the school level, the student must be enrolled in the school for 100 instructional days (days do not have to be continuous), and enrolled on the first day of the school's testing window. This will apply to the 2004 testing. The KBE does have the discretion at its February meeting to revisit this issue and make amendments. **The PrAC members agreed with this definition.** Commissioner Wilhoit indicated that another regulation would be coming forward at the February KBE meeting to deal with other students (*i.e., judicated and social services assigned students*) in terms of accountability.
- Kevin Noland indicated that Kentucky is struggling with complying with NCLB requirements and being able to give a meaningful exam to produce quality results in a timely manner in order to enhance the teaching and learning process (*results out to districts and schools by August 1*). The Office of Assessment and Accountability has been working with the contractors on options. The Commissioner indicated that Kentucky is looking at moving to a system that would be assessed via technology and is looking for a process of in-state scoring by Kentucky teachers. Some of the principals indicated that there is a growing trend of people who think that Kentucky's requirements are too high vs. NCLB (one test and eliminate the open-response questions). The Commissioner indicated that the Governor has expressed a concern that Kentucky needs annual assessments of students (3-8 assessments of NCLB), and that he is interested in every child reading at grade level by the 3rd grade. The Governor also recognizes that Kentucky has made improvements under its current reform initiative.
- The Commissioner indicated that the evaluation of alternative schools is being looked at. There are certain characteristics and traits that should exist in alternative schools to ensure quality. Those schools should be evaluated on the nature of their program design and not on student results.
- The Commissioner indicated that the KDE is looking at redesigning the traditional high school. **This will be a future PrAC agenda item.**
- The PrAC members expressed concern with the lack of communication and qualifications for "highly qualified" educators and other issues by the NCLB requirements. Teachers and other educators need policies and reassurance asap. There are too many individual meetings with superintendents, principals, DACs, teachers, etc. **It was suggested that a team from each district attend one meeting to avoid conflicting messages.** Kevin Noland assured the PrAC members that the KDE would make more of an effort to communicate with teachers and administrators, and the KDE would be meeting with KEA to brief them on issues around NCLB. In February, the KDE will put together an effective communication and video to include questions and answers around NCLB.

Assessment and Accountability (Linda France)

- Linda France shared a “white paper” that was developed by a group of superintendents, brought together by the Partnership for Kentucky Schools, to outline superintendents’ common ground on assessment and accountability. This paper was presented to the KBE at its December meeting. The KASA, the KASS, the Central Kentucky Education Cooperative, the Ohio Valley Education Cooperative, the Northern Kentucky Education Cooperative, and the Green River Education Cooperative have endorsed this paper. The other cooperatives have not been presented this paper yet. This document should be used in conversations with legislators, principals, and others in support of our current accountability system. The Commissioner indicated that the Department is working on assisting teachers by developing a bank of items against the core content that can be released at every grade two times a year. The state assessment format and questions will not be a surprise, and a bank of open-ended response questions will be added and organized by grade levels.
- **The Commissioner will provide the PrAC members with a copy of the breakdown defining adequacy in Kentucky.**
- The Commissioner shared that there may be adjustments in writing portfolios at the secondary level (redesign the senior writing piece and tie it to the IGP). The institutions of higher learning will be asked to use the writing portfolio as a required admissions’ piece. The University of Louisville has been experimenting with this over the past year.
- Linda France indicated that the KDE piloted the idea of Kentucky teachers helping with scoring the assessments last year. This pilot will be done again this summer. **The PrAC members indicated that teachers need to be well trained.**

Report on Gates Grant and SAELP (Linda France and Brenda Hauser)

- Brenda Hauser has been heading up the Gates and the SAELP initiatives. Both initiatives are directed toward improving leadership. The KDE is looking at two alternatives for the next round of the Gates grant. One is a three-day academy that would be a combination of an interactive piece that would involve technology and a facilitator. The other alternative is a tool (*walk-through instrument*) for principals to use in observing classroom instruction (*Dr. Steve Henderson*) that can be downloaded onto the computer to allow principals to see what is happening over time. **The PrAC members liked the observation tool alternative best and would like access to the tool even if they were not a grant recipient. Dr. Steve Henderson will be on the next PrAC agenda.**
- The Wallace Foundation funds 10 SAELP demonstration sites from the state grant along with Jefferson County’s LEAD project. The purpose behind this initiative is to look at ways to allow school leadership to be more effective. The results point to the need to develop a teacher/leader credential, revise the administrative preparation program at the university level, and provide focused, high quality professional development for administrators. The LEAD district has put into place a school administrative manager position. This takes some of the managerial duties off the principal, in order for the principal to focus on instructional leadership. A study is in progress to determine the effect on student achievement. This position will be possibly be in the state’s next SAELP proposal.
- The Commissioner noted that he would push to get universities to take a group of adults in a school and make that the campus. The school is the campus and each teacher is a student on the campus. Teachers will come together for projects that involve the whole school led by the principal or the lead teacher who is a professor, and some classes will be very individualized. A product would be developed for the school’s use. Marty Vowles is experimenting with a person serving in the role of teacher part of the day and a teacher/leader role the rest of the day. College and university leadership programs need to deal with the things that impact student achievement. The Commissioner would like to provide principals with a toolkit to assist them in doing their jobs and/or provide a clearinghouse for professional development at the state or regional levels. The PrAC members called for job sharing responsibilities so that the principals work hours

is more reasonable. A change in culture is needed in order for more administrators to move into principal positions.

Closing the Achievement Gap (Gary Perkins)

- Gary Perkins, Achievement Gap Coordinator, shared that the achievement gap coordinators have been working with district and school leadership across Kentucky in the area of gap analysis. The socio-economic gap is a thread that runs through all other gaps. The achievement gap coordinators have received 767 requests (representing 136 districts) for services from schools and districts. Schools and districts should be using the student data provided by the Office of Assessment and Accountability to identify their gaps. Service networks have been identified as a resource. The gap coordinators have been working with schools on how to use the resources they have more wisely. Ron Bryan indicated that district offices need to differentiate resources according to the gaps. PrAC members indicated that this is extremely difficult at the high school level. He also encouraged principals, as they work on revising their improvement plans, to target the achievement gap areas. A planning process has been piloted with 175 schools to help them determine where their gaps are and to provide a process to close the gaps. The gap coordinators have been helping schools in the area of grant writing to bring more resources into the schools.
- **PrAC members recommended giving teachers more time to work collaboratively together to plan and share ideas in order to change the quality of planning instruction. It was further recommended that more breaks be built into the school calendar (spring and fall) in order for teachers to work with kids differently and make more time for staff development. The calendar needs to be expanded without increasing the number of instructional days or workdays. State data is needed to support this idea. The deans of higher education should be included in this discussion. Ms. France will contact Superintendent Robert Smotherman at Bardstown Independent to find out if he has data that can be forwarded to PrAC members to support this idea. The Commissioner commented that the additional time should be tied with the changed practices.**
- The Department has a second tier of support around achievement gaps. There are a number of assistance programs and diagnostic tools to use to target achievement gaps including students with disabilities. The PrAC called for the focus to be on early intervention at the primary and elementary levels. Parents do not know what children are expected to know. Parents need a simple guide to help them focus on readiness skills their children should know at a certain age. Strategies used for students with disabilities to learn are needed for **ALL** students. Technology has the potential to increase individualized attention and instruction. Some students do not see the need for an education. **The Commissioner will look at the ADA policy** in terms of early graduation. If a student graduates early in good standing, the school should not be penalized. People who have gone through the alternative certification route would be excellent candidates for the two-year internship programs.
- Check out the achievement gap Web page: http://www.kentuckyschools.net/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=32151619&EXTRA_ARG=&host_id=1&page_id=1025&query=achievement+gap+coordinators&hiword=ACHIEVEMENT+GAP+COORDINATORS+. The Web page includes strategies and professional development opportunities for your use in closing the gaps. A monthly newsletter will be disseminated to all districts and schools.

PrAC Membership

- Regina Mingua will be sending letters to members whose membership will be renewed for one or two years to find out if they can continue to serve. Also, recommendations for this council will be accepted for the vacant positions.

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 30, 2004